Tracks FAQs
What Is Modeled Air Data?

[Desiree Robinson] Hello everyone. Thank you for tuning in to the Tracks FAQs Podcast, where we explore topics about CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. In this podcast series, CDC scientists address frequently asked questions about the National Tracking Network, including using and applying data, running queries, and much more. Epidemiologist Heather Strosnider joins us to answer one of our top questions. Thanks for joining us.

[Heather Strosnider] Thank you.

[Desiree Robinson] Heather would you tell us….*What is modeled air data?*

[Heather Strosnider] Sure. Modeled air data are used to estimate levels of ozone and particulate matter, or PM2.5, in the air. This data is applied to areas that don't have air quality monitors and to fill in time gaps when monitors may not be recording data. So, where does this modeled data come from? The Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, maintains a database called the Air Quality System. This system contains data from about 4,000 monitoring stations around the country. However, these monitoring stations don't operate all the time and are in only about 20 percent of the counties in the United States. Modeled air data statistically combine monitoring data from the Air Quality System with results from another EPA dataset called the Community Multiscale Air Quality model. These estimates are available for every day of the year, except the first and the last, and they cover the entire United States, except Alaska and Hawaii.

Both monitored and modeled data are available on the Tracking Network. You can use these data to track possible exposures to ozone and PM2.5, to evaluate their health impact, to conduct analytical studies linking health effects and the environment, and to guide public health actions.

[Desiree Robinson] Special thanks to CDC Epidemiologist Heather Strosnider for joining us for this episode of Tracks FAQs. Thank you, Heather. That's all for this episode of Tracks FAQs. To submit a question for a CDC Tracking expert to address in this series, please e-mail trackingsupport@cdc.gov.